

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director for Intelligence  
Deputy Director for Plans  
Deputy Director for Science and Technology  
Deputy Director for Support

SUBJECT : List of Key Documents for Agency Annual Report

REFERENCE : a. Memorandum from Executive Director-Comptroller  
to Deputy Directors dated 26 May 1972, "Information  
Control - Archives, History and Records."  
b. Memorandum from Executive Director-Comptroller  
to Deputy Directors dated 3 July 1972. "Agency  
Annual Report"

1. This memorandum provides supplemental guidance as to what kinds of documents and files are to be listed in each components' submission.

2. Selection of which specific documents are "key" and which are of archival quality is a very subjective judgement which can only be made by the component. Detailed instructions concerning the content of each component's contribution are contained in the references cited above. Offices should pay particular attention to paragraphs 5 and 6 of reference b. The Agency Annual Report is the new focal point for the agency's historical program. History should emphasize development - how things were at the beginning, how they changed, and how they ended - not simply list the highlights of the component's activities, nor only its results. It is intended that each component's "key documents and files" shall be those which support and substantiate its narrative contribution.

3. The component's list of its key documents and files will be used to discern what is significant from what is routine in order to facilitate the study of the agency's past performance and to enable this agency to rapidly identify, locate, and examine those documents and files which

best reveal its plans, policies, and participation in particular events at particular times. Self-examination is necessary if the agency is to improve its performance. There is growing interest in the agency's activities and role in formulating national policy, and there is a growing commitment on the part of those who govern to make information available to those who ask for it as soon as it can reasonably be released. Rapid reference to significant records will ensure timely response to inquiries, thus protecting the agency's interests and the national security.

4. The criteria for inclusion in agency archives is that documents must be "of sufficient historical or other value to warrant their continual preservation by the United States Government". While there is a danger of overlooking significant facts or trends when one is too close to the event, the decision on what to retain for tomorrow must be made today. It is not unreasonable to believe that what is important today will be of historical significance tomorrow. Look for overviews, synopses, summaries, and highest level policy papers rather than detailed office working records, but be alert to preserve all the important original source materials for future researchers. The safest way is to hold on to more, subject to later review. More specific positive guidance is difficult to provide in a general paper. Prophecy is the essence of archival evaluation. Components must judge for themselves which of their documents and files are significant and of enduring value. Archives aren't intended to be exclusively for historical use. Each component's experience should be a guide to which of their records are required sufficiently often to merit permanent retention.

5. An analysis of those lists thus far submitted in response to reference b. makes it possible to describe in some detail that which is not desired:

a. Lists of each component's published finished intelligence or other product bibliographies are not desired. These items are included in agency archives at the time they are published.

b. Lists of personnel changes, organization charts, and announcements of appointments to important positions are not desired if this information is regularly included in agency archives by the Office of Personnel.

c. Comprehensive lists of all those documents and files which are required to be retained permanently at the records center for legal, audit, or other reasons are not desired. This information is already available to agency archives from each component's Records Control Schedule, Form 139.

d. Routine unsummarized raw data such as daily or weekly reports are not desired. These probably have been summarized in more comprehensive reports. Too much detail obscures what is significant.

e. Most of the component lists thus far have been too short or too cryptic and the key documents too summary to be useful, Component's lists should include approximately 15-20 documents or one full page.

f. Key documents should pertain to the component listing them and to the current time period with which the report is concerned.

6. For more specific guidance, questions not answered above  
should be referred to the historical Staff, extension  STATINTL

FOR THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:

STATINTL  
Special Assistant to the  
Executive Director  
Comptroller for Information Control